

**Planning Conference for ELPA at Wayne RESA
January 30, 2006
Questions and Answers**

Questions:

- 1. Title III defines English language learners (ELLs) as individuals who are aged 3-21. However, the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) is designed to test students who are K-12. Should districts plan to use other assessments for the preschoolers (age 4)?**

Yes.

- 2. How do we do pre-ID for private school students? Do we use the same process?**

Non-public (private) schools can pre-identify their ELPA students on the Office of Education Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) secure web site using one of the following four methods:

- a) Pre-ID File Import. Our file requirements can be found on the [login](#) page of the OEAA secure website by clicking on the blue Pre-ID File Format link. The file can then be loaded on to the OEAA secure website by the school
- b) Individual Pre-Identification. Schools can use the Student Search screen to individually identify students who are already in the system that will be administered in the ELPA assessment.
- c) New Student. Schools can use the New Student screen to individually identify students who have no record on the OEAA secure website and will be administered in the ELPA assessment.
- d) Student Test Cycle Copy. Schools can use the Student Test Cycle Copy screen to copy a group of students that have previously tested into the spring 2006 ELPA test cycle.

Pre-identification of students on the OEAA secure website is the same for ELPA as it is for MEAP with exception of choosing the ELPA assessment cycle. The OEAA secure website (www.michigan.gov/meap-secure) may also be known as the MEAP website.

- 3. Do subtests need to be completed in one day or could tests be continued the next day in a middle or high school setting?**

Subtests need to be completed in one sitting unless they have been divided into two parts. Writing has been divided into two parts, Writing Conventions (multiple-choice format) and Writing (open-ended format). Part A can be given in one sitting, and Part B in a second sitting. This was done to assist with

scheduling, since time required for writing can vary broadly from student to student. In a similar fashion, Reading has been divided into two parts for students in grades K-2.

4. Do subtests need to be given in any particular order?

No. ELPA subtests do not have a prescribed order to be given.

5. Will the ELPA score be used in place of the MEAP score?

The ELPA score can only be used in place of the MEAP English language arts (ELA) score for newly arrived students. These are ELLs who have been in a United States public school for one school year or less, at the time of the MEAP assessments. For example, if an ELL meets this criteria at the time of MEAP in fall 2006, the ELPA score can be used as a substitute for ELA. These students still need to take the MEAP mathematics and science or social studies assessments with the appropriate accommodations. A form to document the required information regarding these recently arrived students is available on the OEAA secure website. (See question 2 for directions for accessing the website.)

6. If our ELLs took the MEAP test in the fall, do they still need to take the ELPA?

ELLs are to participate in both assessment systems. MEAP and ELPA are considered to be separate—or different assessment requirements—as described in the No Child Left Behind legislation. MEAP is the assessment system that the State of Michigan uses to measure student progress with Michigan content standards in mathematics, English language arts, and science.

ELPA is the assessment system that the State of Michigan has developed to measure student progress with learning English and is based on the English language proficiency standards. In past years, schools and districts chose from six off-the-shelf English language proficiency assessments and student scores were converted to a common set proficiency scores. These scores were then used for Title III reporting. Once implemented, the results from the ELPA will be used for Title III reporting.

The only exception is a recently arrived ELL. For more information regarding these students, please see the answer to question 5.

7. Where can the validity and reliability of the ELPA statistics be found?

Statistics, including data related to the validity and reliability of the ELPA, will be included in the technical manual, which will be published as a final step for each ELPA test cycle. Since the ELPA has not yet been administered, these statistics are not yet available.

8. How are new students assessed who come in after spring ELPA and before MEAP fall testing?

Schools and districts will continue to use an English language proficiency assessment of their choice as a placement or screening device for determining eligibility for services. In the future, the State plans to develop a screening tool that is based on ELPA and can be used any time of the year. Schools and districts will be notified when this assessment tool is available.

9. Our school was a “test pilot school” last year. It took 40-60 minutes per student. We will be testing approximately 700-800 students. We have approximately 20 people available 1-2 hours a day to help administer it. How are we going to manage? Please let us know how – or is this one going to be shorter – Frankly, we are “scared” of the enormity of it!

The length of the listening, reading and writing subtests, which are group-administered, is estimated to take 40-45 minutes per student for each section. The speaking section, which is administered individually to students, is estimated to take 15-20 minutes.

The assessment length is due to the ELP standards, the need to report at least 3 proficiency levels, and federal requirements to provide individual results in the areas of listening, reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension. There is also a requirement that we conduct the ELPA as an annual assessment—at one specified time across the state. To facilitate resource issues, schools and districts may begin testing when materials are received in mid-March.

10. In some schools, we have few (sometimes only one) ELL, can the test be administered on a one-to-one setting?

Absolutely. The ability to give the listening, reading and writing sections of ELPA in a group setting is intended to streamline administration in schools where larger numbers of ELL students will take the assessment.

11. Will students who have been formerly limited English proficient (FLEP) for less than two years be tested?

For this spring, assessing FLEP students is an option for schools and districts. We certainly encourage the use of the ELPA to assist schools in monitoring student progress of FLEP students.

If you choose to assess FLEP students, please order ELPA materials for these students and mark the appropriate circle on the answer document to indicate FLEP status.

12. Do you expect teachers to stop instruction and spend the time on testing?

We would hope that schools and districts can plan the logistics for the ELPA so that instruction can continue for students during the time that they are not being assessed.

13. Is ELPA administered at the same time as MEAP. If yes, Why?

Scheduling ELPA at about the same time as the spring MEAP high school assessment is not optimal. However, it became the recommended choice because ELPA is replacing an annual ELP assessment that needs to occur within a six-month window of October funding. There were concerns with schools not having adequate assessment administration resources if ELPA were scheduled in the fall at approximately the same time as MEAP in grades 3-9.

ELPA is replacing the annual spring assessment of English language proficiency that has been required for Title III reporting. In the past, schools have chosen an ELP assessment from a menu of six off-the-shelf English language proficiency assessments that are available from commercial publishers.

14. Did you say/imply if someone has an accent, they should not administer the listening portion?

There are some extended prompts or “stories” in listening that are read to students. We do recommend that assessment proctors include bilingual paraprofessionals who work with ELLs in programs each day. However, for this section, we recommend the use of an audiotape or CD to standardize the spoken language for prompts where feasible. This will assist assessment proctors with a pronounced accent to participate fully with ELPA administration and assist the MDE in ensuring standardization across the state.

15. When you said use the OEAA secure site, do you mean the MEAP secure site with current password and user name?

Yes, they are one in the same.

16. Should we assess all students who use English as a second language?

All English language learners who are eligible for services need to be assessed, regardless of whether or not they are receiving services.

17. IEP's address MEAP and MI-Access not ELPA. If a student takes MI-Access Participation, do we still have to try to test all students including these students?

All students who are eligible for services need to be assessed, including students with disabilities. We recommend that schools and districts order the appropriate grade level materials for the ELPA. Once received, please review for appropriate use with students. The ELPA section of the assessment accommodations guidelines may also help in this determination. If it is not appropriate, according to a student's IEP, please contact the OEAA staff at 1-877-560-8378.

18. How will the MDE provide levels 1A-5?

The ELPA will provide at least the three levels of proficiency—basic, intermediate, and proficient—that are required by federal guidelines. Scale scores will also be reported using a common scale across grade level, providing schools and districts information about student performance within—and across—proficiency levels.

19. What is the AYP expectation for ELLs per year?

The assessment performance expectations for ELLs are tied to the Title III reporting for the State of Michigan. The assessment results are reported in terms of an individual student's growth or gains from one year to another and the average gains for Title III program.

20. What about students who arrive mid-year?

ELLs arriving mid-year need to be assessed with ELPA in the spring.

21. "Eligible" Do we need to also consider what service the student receives, or only that they are eligible to receive service?

The school or district needs to consider only that the student is eligible for services, not whether the student is receiving services.

22. If MDE is recommending the use of audiotapes/CDs, are they automatically sent with test materials or do we need to request them?

Please order one audiotape or CD for each group of students you plan to assess. This can be an estimate—try to make it a close one. Additional audiotapes/CDs may be ordered through the additional orders process.

23. Will you be including extra materials when you ship them out – or should we “pad” our order by a few extras?

We will automatically send a 7 percent overage.

24. Will MDE automatically send coordinator/administrator manuals? Do we have to request?

We will automatically send one coordinator/administrator manual to each school and district in the state.

25. Are Writing Convention items read to students or are they expected to read them?

Writing Convention directions and sample items are read to all students taking ELPA. Accommodations that include reading both questions and answers can be provided to ELLs at the basic and lower intermediate proficiency levels (see number 26 of the Assessment Accommodations Summary Table-- Draft. Version that includes accommodations for ELPA). There are also other standard accommodations for students with disabilities.

26. In regards to the Speaking portion of the test, do the assessors need to be certified staff? Also, do two people need to listen and score each individual student?

The staff that administer the speaking portion can be staff that qualify as assessment proctors as described in the updated OEAA Professional Assessment and Accountability Practices for Educators, August 2005, (website www.michigan.gov/oeaa). Proctors work closely with certified staff, who are actually in charge of the assessment administration process. It is important that all staff involved in the assessment process receive appropriate training prior to use in the administration process.

27. Can all districts begin testing upon receipt of the test materials?

Yes.

28. What do we do for students with disabilities whose IEPs call for an alternate assessment?

Order the appropriate ELPA materials for these students, i.e. audiotapes/CDs, enlarged print, etc. Also see question 17.

29. May the ELPA stand as the initial oral and reading proficiency test for students who have not been assessed to date? If so, may we pre-ID based solely upon the Home Language survey?

Yes. In this case, the results of ELPA would serve as the assessment used to determine eligibility for services.

30. If a student began the 2005-06 school year as an ELL student, but exited the program before the April testing date, should that student still be taking the ELPA?

Yes. The student was reported as an ELL in the fall and was eligible to receive services for the 2005-2006 school year. The student needs to be included in the annual spring ELPA for Title III reporting purposes.

31. Will the State work to change SRSD recording from levels 1A - % to Basic/Inte/Prof?

We will request that SRSD update the assessment fields to reflect ELPA reporting.

32. Do ELL students attending alternative high schools have to take the ELPA also?

Yes. All ELLs who are enrolled in grades K-12 and are eligible for services are to be assessed.

33. Can we pull students from the February 5 SRSD report?

The February 8 SRSD collection will not be available to use in time for the ELPA pre-id process. All pre-id information must be loaded into the OEAA Secure Site by districts or schools by February 15th. However, there are a number of other ways to populate the pre-id fields. These methods were outlined by David Judd as part of the January 30 presentation. If you need assistance with pre-id process for ELPA, please contact the OEAA help line at 1-877-560-8378.

34. Will results impact AYP?

Not directly at this time. However, the performance of ELLs on MEAP, as a subgroup, is critical in helping a school or district make AYP. As students make progress in learning English, it is expected that the number of ELLs who score at the proficient level in MEAP will increase.

35. Can parents “opt students out” of testing?

As with MEAP, there is no parent exemption from state assessment. According to section 3302 of No Child Left Behind legislation, under Parental Notification, the assessment of English language proficiency precedes parent notification and parental choice to participate or not to participate in the Title III program.

The pool of students to be included in ELPA is determined when students are identified as eligible for LEP services. In Michigan, this means determining through Home Language Survey if there is a language other than English in the home or spoken by the child. If either condition is true then the student is assessed to determine English language proficiency. Students scoring below proficient are part of the ELPA pool.

36. Are foreign exchange students eligible for the ELPA if they meet the criteria of the federal government?

Yes.

37. Must we test grade 12 foreign exchange students since they are with us for this school year only?

Foreign exchange students are to be assessed with ELPA if they are eligible for services (and if districts include them in the state aid membership count in a grade level when the state assessments are administered).

38. Do we assign students to a grade level based on their grade level in school, rather than their English Language Proficiency level? For example, a 9th grader with K-2 skills would be assigned to the Grade 3-12 assessment, right?

Students are to take the ELPA that match their grade level of enrollment: If students are enrolled in grade 9, they will take the 9-12 level of ELPA.

39. Are we required to test formerly LEP students (after 2 years of monitoring)?

Testing FLEP students is an option for spring 2006; schools and districts may formulate their own policies related to the assessment of FLEP students with ELPA. If ELPA materials are needed to assess FLEP students, please be sure to order adequate assessment materials based on enrollments provided and include these students in the pre-id process, either as part of a file, or with labels, once ELPA materials have been received in buildings.

40. Do we include our FLEP students in the assessment?

Please see the answer to question 39.

41. Do we know what time the training will be provided on March 2? Will it be webcast? If not, do you know where the training locations will be?

The webcast on March 2 will be from 3:00-4:30 p.m. In addition, special training sessions are being held at a number of sites. Please see the announcement flyer that has been posted on the OEAA website. Due to the large numbers of participants anticipated at some locations, pre-registration is requested. Locations will be posted on the OEAA website.

42. Does this take the place of the ELA portion of the MEAP for ELLs? Is that true for our 11th grade students taking the MEAP this spring?

ELLs are expected to take the ELA MEAP assessment to measure progress with Michigan content standards and ELPA to measure progress in acquisition of English language skills. The only exception is an ELL who is “recently arrived” to the United States. Please see the answer to question 6 for more information.

43. How long do we anticipate it will take to administer ELPA to each category of students?

Listening, reading and writing are administered in groups. Of the three, Writing is projected to the greatest variation in the amount of time needed to complete the portions that are open-ended. It is anticipated that students who are more proficient will write longer sentences, etc. Speaking is individually administered. The length of time is again expected to vary with the length of the speaking response to each question, with students who are more proficient taking longer to assess.